

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

God the Merciful says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Say (O Muhammad to the people) if you love Allah then follow me (i.e Muhammad, ﷺ). (3:31)

FOLLOWING THE Sunnah (ittiba-e-Sunnat) is the basis and the only way of gaining the love of Allah. And the Holy Qur'an is explicit in this declaration that with out following the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) a believer (Mu'min) shall never mount any pedestal of Divine love. The luminosity that is generated in the heart following the Sunnah can never be acquired from even a thousand prostrations of Nafli prayers.

Contrary to the misunderstanding that Sunnah refers to insignificant, unimportant and optional acts and practices in which the individual have unrestricted choice of omitting and committing, the Sunnah is the culture of Islam. As we know, Islam is not confined to a few obligatory acts of worship and abstention from some prohibitions. Every ideology and every religion has a set of obligations and prohibitions, yet, Islam has an all-imposing and an all embracing system of life known as the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). About this incumbent system, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Verily for you there is a beautiful example in the (way of life) of the Prophet of Allah for those who hope to (meet) Allah (with pleasure) and the last day". (60:6)

Those who are in the quest of Allah's

pleasure and seek success in the Hereafter are required to whole heartedly and in the entirety follow the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned in the aforementioned Qur'anic verse.

In many other verses the Holy Qur'an commands obedience to the Prophet of Allah. The obedience is commanded in every sphere of life. This obedience is not partial but in full as the Qur'an orders. The command to obey the Prophet (ﷺ) is not restricted to acts like Fardh, Wajib and Sunnat-e-Muakkada and to the prohibitions known as Haram (unlawful). Obedience to every desirable (Mustahab) act and abstention from such acts which does not favours Allah's pleasure or which will constitute a loss in the hereafter are incumbent upon every Muslim. A Momin who claims or believes to love the Messenger of Allah cannot abstain from an act or deal simply because it has been categorized as desirable (Mustahab) by the Fuqha (Muslim jurists). Similarly, he should not commit an act that is unlawful. One who commits and omits on the basis of this idea, lacks true love for Allah and His Messenger.

The Qur'an does not order obedience to the Prophet in only the Fardh and Wajib but in all his practices of spiritual and worldly life. It is ordained by the God in the following verse:

"Whatever the Messenger of Allah brings to you, adhere to it and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it". (59:7)

As far as the practical life of a Muslim

is concerned, he is required to offer total obedience to Sunnah. In this lies his success in this world and in the hereafter. The minimum punishment a person will suffer for intentionally or carelessly abandoning or disregarding the Sunnah is the deprivation from the intercession (Shafa'at) of the Prophet. This is by no means a small punishment.

Every teaching, habit, practice, like and dislike of the Prophet (ﷺ) comes within the scope of Sunnah. Just as the physical life of a believer has to be in terms of the Sunnah, so too has his spiritual life — his character — is also to be regulated in accordance with the Sunnah. Acts of ibadaat, beliefs, social conduct, character and all other dealings of Muslims should be in full submission to the Sunnah.

It is only when the Sunnah fully permeates the lives of Muslims will they gain honour and success in this world as in hereafter. The present deplorable and

disgraceful conditions of the Ummah is the direct result of ignoring the golden examples of Sunnah of the Prophet. We cannot expect to achieve success and victory in any field of worldly life or in Akhirah having cast aside the Sunnah to follow and adopt libertine cults and cultures of non-believers. As long as Muslims fail to understanding this truth they will remain in ruin and disgrace. Sharply rebuking those who turns towards the ways and cults of the infidals, the Holy Qur'an says:

“Do they search for the law of the ignorance”. (5:50)

All the ways of life other than those governed by the Sunnah are the ways of ignorance. Never is the love of Allah and the love of Prophet (ﷺ) attainable by persuing the ways of infidals and of ignorants. As long as the Sunnah is not being introduced fully into every facet of our life our drift into the abyss of ignominy and ruin will continue.....FARID

FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

For those who have done good is the best (reward, i.e. Paradise) and even more (i.e. having the honor of glancing at the Countenance of Allah). Neither darkness nor dust nor any humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise, they will abide therein forever.
(Surah Yunus, 10:26)

CALL FROM THE MINARET

Dr. Maulana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman
Al-Ansari Al-Qaderi (R.A.)

DUTIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL TOWARDS THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

SOCIETY VIS-A-VIS THE INDIVIDUAL:

(i) The organic nature of human society:

“Oh mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single soul, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; — Reverence Allah through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.” (IV : 1).

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (XLIX: 13).

“And your creation and your resurrection is in no wise but as an individual soul: for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things). (XXI : 28).

(ii) The organic nature of Muslim society as coming into existence by a “Contract”:

“Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): They fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in Truth,

through the *Taurat*, the *Injil*, and the Qur’an: and who is more faithful to his Covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: That is the achievement supreme.” (IX : 111).

(iii) The manifoldness of social life as the natural condition of the progress of human civilisation:

“By the Night as it conceals (the light); by the Day as it appears in glory; by (the mystery of) the creation of male and female;—verily, (the ends) ye strive for are diverse.” (XCII: 1-4).

(iv) The importance of social environment for the development of the individual:

“And fear tumult (or oppression), which affecteth not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong: and know that Allah is strict in punishment.” (VIII : 25).

(v) Treating the demands of society above the demands of self, i.e., subordinating personal interests to the interests of the Social Whole created by Islam, enjoined:

“Say: if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline;

or the dwellings in which ye delight—are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause;—then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.” (IX : 24).

1. DUTY RELATING TO ACTIVE STRUGGLE FOR THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL PERFECTION OF THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

Active struggle for the spiritual and moral perfection of humanity in general, and of their own community in particular, is the very mission of the Muslims:

“Ye are the best of People, evolved for (the service of) mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. . . .” (III ; 110).

Indeed, it is the inseparable quality of Muslim character:

“ . . . (it is their character that) they (always) enjoin good and (always) forbid evil. . . .” (IX: 112).

Hence, Muslims have been commanded to set aright their affairs:

“ . . . So be careful your duty to Allah and set aright matters among you (in respect of your mutual duties)....” (VIII : I)

Nay, the Holy Qur’an goes beyond that. It orders all Muslims to engage in an unceasing struggle for the promotion of the Cause of spiritual and moral perfection of Muslim society in particular and of humanity in general. It says:

“O ye who believe! Be ye helpers (in the Cause) of Allah (—the Cause of

helping human beings to spiritual and moral perfection). . . .” (LXI : 14).

While laying down that duty, however, the Holy Qur’an also guarantees success, if the struggle is pursued with the fulfilment of all the prescribed conditions:

“ . . . Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (Cause);—for verily Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (able to enforce His Will).” (XXII : 40).

“O ye who believe! if ye will aid (the Cause of) Allah, He will aid you and will make your foothold firm.” (XLVII: 71).

One of those conditions is that the struggle has to be pursued not only as an individual responsibility but also co-operatively and collectively:

“ . . . Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and enmity. . . .” (V: 3).

2. DUTIES RELATING TO ACTIVE STRUGGLE FOR ENSURING AND PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC SOUNDNESS OF THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF ‘WEALTH FOR WELFARE’:

The Holy Qur’an denounces inordinate love of wealth as an anti-Islamic quality of character, which leads to hell:

“Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and back-biter, who pileth up wealth and layeth it by, thinking that his wealth would make him last for ever! By no means! he will be surely thrown into ‘That which Breaks to Pieces’.” (CIV:1-4).

Similarly, it condemns those who amass wealth, make it idle, and do not spend freely for the good of their fellow-beings:

“ . . . And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty—On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs.—’This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasure) ye buried!’.” (IX : 34-35).

Abstaining from spending for the promotion of truth and righteousness and the welfare of fellow-beings leads to the ruin (moral, spiritual and economic) of the individual and the community:

"And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands contribute to your destruction; but do good; for Allah loveth those who do good." (II: 195).

Its consequences are, indeed, grave, as exemplified in the story of Qar'un (or, Korah):

"Qarun was, doubtless, of the people of Moses; but he acted insolently towards them: Such were the treasures We had bestowed on him, that their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. Behold, his people said to him: 'Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches). But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief.'"

He said: 'This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge which I have.' Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him (whole) generations,—which were superior to him in strength and greater in the amount (of riches) they had collected? But the wicked are not called (immediately) to account for their sins. So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter. Said those whose aim is the Life of this World: 'Oh! that we had the like of what Qarun has got! for he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune!' But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: 'Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good). Then, We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself.'" (XXVIII : 76-81).

Viewing the problem from the other side, we find that, according to the Holy Qur'an, spending freely in the service of fellow-beings forms a sure guarantee for the prosperity of the individual as well as of the community. We are told:

"The parable of those who spend their substance in the Way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth: for Allah careth for all, and He knoweth all things." (II: 261).

Lo! those who believe and do good works and establish worship and pay the poor-due, their reward is with their Lord and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve. (II: 277).

Foundation upon which the entire structure of religion stands

Atif Noor Khan

The word 'Aqeedah' is derived from al-Aqad, which is to 'tie something (firmly)', and "I'tiqad such and such", means "I tied my heart and mind to it." Aqeedah is what a person takes as a religion. It is said, 'he has a good Aqeedah' meaning protected from doubts'.

Adeedah is an action of the heart. which is to believe and affirm something in the heart.

The meaning of Aqeedah in the Shari'ah: It is the belief in Allah, His Angels His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and belief in al-Qadr (Predestination) — its good and evil. These are called the Pillars of faith.

The Shari'ah is divided into two parts: beliefs and actions. Beliefs are issues, which are not related to how an act is performed, like belief in the Rububiyah (Lordship) of Allah, the obligation to worship Him (alone) and the belief in the rest of the aforementioned pillars of faith.

These are called Asliyah — the basic foundation.

Actions are issues related to how actions are performed like prayer, Zakat, Fasting and other rulings with regards to actions.

These are termed as Far'eyyah — the branches — because their soundness or corruption is based upon the beliefs.

Thus, the correct Aqeedah (belief) is the foundation upon which the religion is based and with it the actions are set aright, as the Most High, said, "So, whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." (al-Kahf, 18:110)

"And indeed, it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) as it was to those (i.e, Prophets) before you, O listeners if you join others in worship with Allah, (then surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers. "az-Zumar 39:65)

"So, worship Allah (alone) by performing religious deeds sincerely for His sake. Surely, the religion is for Allah only." (az-Zumar, 39:2-3)

These verses, and the numerous narrations that have been related concerning their meaning, confirm that action are not accepted unless they are free from Shirh (polytheism).

Therefore, it was the main concern of the Messengers (A.S) to rectify the beliefs first and thus, the first thing they called their nations to was the sole worship of Allah and abandonment of worship to anything other than Him. As He, the Most High, says: "And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming), 'Worship Allah (alone), and avoid the Taghoot (everything

that is worshiped other than Allah)".
(An-Nahl, 16:36)

The first thing that every Prophet (A.S) addressed his people with was, Worship Allah; you have no other Ilah (deity worthy of being worshipped) but Him." (al-A'raf, 7:59, 65, 73, 85)

It was said by Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Shu'aib and all the other prophets (A.S) to their nations.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stayed in Makkah for thirteen years, after (he was

bestowed with) Prophethood, calling people to tawheed, and rectifying their Aqeedah, because it is the foundation upon which the entire structure of religion stands.

The DUAAT (callers to the religion of Allah) and those who seek to guide others in every age, have followed the example of the Messengers and the Prophets (A.S), who initiated their call with Tawheed and correction of Aqeedah and subsequently, they would focus upon the remaining commandments of the religion.
(Courtesy: DAWN)

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ABDUL QADIR JILANI (R.A.)

Dr. Waffie Muhammad

Abdul Qadir Jilani (R.A.) was indeed a great worker for Allah and His Deen. He was specially chosen by the Lord to revive true Islam when the Muslims seemed to have diverted their focus from what is required of true believers. They were:

- busy debating non important issues, like whether the Qur'an was created or not; was it permissible to honour the Prophet (ﷺ) or not, etc.
- being attacked by the Crusaders.
- Indulging in developing "cults", getting involved with Jinns, etc.
- Corrupt to a large extent.

As a result of the success of his mission and his spiritual elevation, it seems fitting to conclude that he is one of those about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke about. The Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said the following, as was reported by Muaz bin Jabal. He relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allah says:

For those who love one another for the sake of Fear of My Majesty and Magnificence, there will be high seats of light that will be the envy of prophets and martyrs (for them in the Hereafter). (Tirmizi)

Shaikh Jilani (R.A.) was:

- A learned Muslim.
- A highly spiritually disciplined person.
- Dedicated to the service of humanity.
- A wealthy man.

- Very humble.

Kept a close watch on his ego, e.g. he was about to wear a new beautiful shirt, so he tore it then patch it then wore it; that was because he did not want to feel happy with his new shirt.

- He had complete reliance on Allah and knew that Allah was everything for him.

Some of the things he taught were:

- A person should try not to swear by Allah, unless it absolutely necessary. If he can avoid doing this, Allah will open the door of His light for him and he will become a good person.

- A person should avoid telling lies whether in jest or earnest; and practice self control.

- A person should always try to keep his promise, and if he cannot do so he should cease making promises altogether.

- A person should avoid cursing anything in the realm of creation; he should try not to hurt anyone or anything.

- A person should avoid invoking evil on others, on even the one who has wronged him.

- A person should try to avoid labelling a believer as a polytheist

- A person should refrain from contemplating or indulging in sinful offences.

- A person should try not to lay burdens

on anyone or any creature.

A person should not expect anyone to satisfy his greed for material things.

A person should try to be humble at all times.

(Details of the explanations can be found in Futuh Al Ghaib)

One of the great teachings of this elevated Shaikh is that he was able to revive the believers' understanding that the role of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was not only to receive the Qur'an on behalf of the Muslims, but he the Prophet (ﷺ) is still active in bestowing gifts (called Salaat) on all the believers who indulge in sending gifts (Salaat and salaams) upon him. This can be understood if one understands what is meant in the Hadith reported by Ubayy. He went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and had a dialogue with the Messenger (ﷺ) as follows:

O Messenger of Allah, I send a lot of Salaat upon you, how much of my prayer should be Salaat upon you? The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: Whatever you want. I said: a quarter. He said: Whatever you want, but if you increase it, it would be better for you. I said: A half. He said: Whatever you want, but if you increase it, it will be better for you. I said: Two thirds. He said: Whatever you want, but if you increase it, it will be better for you. I said: Should I make the whole prayer for you? He said: this will be sufficient to release your distress and earn you forgiveness for your sins.

The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

When any of you supplicates, let him start by Praising Allah and Glorifying Him; may He be Exalted; then let send Salaat upon the Prophet, and after that let him make

supplication as he wishes.

A person should always keep in mind that Allah and the Angels are sending a gift called Salaat on the Prophet (ﷺ). As he is not a selfish person he distributes this to all those who selects to send Salaat on him. So every time a person says *Allahumma sallay alaa Muhammadin*, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) gives to that person something of the gift that Allah and His Angels are giving to him.

Abdul Qadir Jilani taught his disciples to supplicate by praising Allah and then sending Salaat on the Prophet (ﷺ) before requesting the Lord for anything. We find a very good example of his teachings in this matter in his *Darood e akseer-e-Azam*.

To give an example of how the Shakikh made his supplication, he used to say:

Allahumma sallay alaa Muhammadin salaatan taghfiru bihaa zunubanaa. O Allah send Salaat on Muhammad, and through this gift may You forgive us for our sins.

The message given by this great Shakikh was so effective that thousands accepted Islam, the Muslim Ummah revived their spiritual focus, they desisted from taking help from any (Jinns, etc.) creature, but turned directly to the Lord in prayer, they learnt to respect and love the Prophet (ﷺ) and underwent all the training for the purpose of controlling their nafs.

Even today the teaching of this great Shaikh is held in high esteem and the spiritual students of the Qadriyah Order recognise the connection he still maintains with all those who are aspiring to get close to Allah and His Rasul by cultivating humility and patience.

WHO WAS ZUL-QARNAIN?

Allama Abdullah Yousuf Ali

A great deal of literature numbering to millions of pages have been contributed by Mufasssirs, Faqih and writers about "Who was Zulqarnain"? A legendary personality. Extensive and acute research has not yet been able to establish in its finality as to who was Zulqarnain between Alexander the Great or Cyrus the Great (Korash Azam of Persia) who flourished 2500 years ago.

All stories or narrations about Zulqarnain are referred in Qur'an as Parable for their spiritual meanings. In the metaphorical sense, Zulqarnain means "Lord of the two Qarns—horns". But no mention has been made about who amongst the two was "Zulqarnain".

We bring for our readers a comprehensive study carried out by Allama Abdullah Yousuf Ali in Greek history as well as from the Qur'anic literature. He has tried to prove that Zulqarnain was Alexander the Great. He does not consider that historical or geographical considerations have much bearing on the story treated as parable, Zulqarnain's story is . . . Editor

What is the meaning of the name or title Zulqarnain — "Lord of the two Qarns" "Qarn" may mean: (1) a horn in the literal sense, as in the case of a ram or bull; (2) a horn in a metaphorical sense, as in English, the horn of a crescent, or by a further metaphor, the horn of a kingdom or territory, two portions at opposite ends; (3) by another metaphor, a summit, a lock of hair, typifying strength a crest such as Eastern kings wear on their diadems; (4) referring to time, an Epoch, an Age, a Generation. Meaning (1) is inapplicable to a man or a great King: The other three meanings may be applicable, as implying: (2) Lord of East and West, Lord of wide territory or of two kingdoms; (3) Lord of two crests on his diadem, typifying two kingdoms, or a rank superior to that of an ordinary king; (4) Lord of more than one epoch; one whose power and influence extend far beyond his lifetime.

If we accept the popular identification of Zulqarnain with Alexander, all the three latter designations would be applicable to

him, as he was Lord of the West and the East, Lord of the Greek States united for the first time and of the widely-extended Persian Dominion which included all Western Asia, Egypt, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and the Punjab (at least portions). He is represented on his coins with two horns on his head: he considered himself a son of Jupiter Ammon (who had the two horns of a ram), with a divine mission. He revolutionised the history of Europe, Asia, and Africa (Egypt), and his influence lasted for many generations after his death at the young age of 33. He lived from B.C. 356 to 323, but his name was one to conjure with for many centuries after him. It was not only on account of his political power, but his cultural influences. Through his conquests Greek art gave the impulse to Gandhara art in Central Asia and North-West India. The city of Alexandria which he founded in Egypt became the cultural centre, not only for Greece and Rome, but for Judaism and Christianity, and retained its supremacy till the sixth century of the

Christian era. Justinian closed its schools of philosophy in 529. Its philosophic and scientific schools spread their influence over even a wider area than the Mediterranean basin.

Now the generality of the world of Islam have accepted Alexander the Great as the one meant by the epithet Zulqarnain. But some of our Ulema have raised doubts about it and made other suggestions. One is that it was not the Macedonian Alexander the Great, but an earlier pre-historic king contemporary with Abraham; because, they say, Zulqarnain was a man of faith (18:88-98), while Alexander the Great was a Pagan and believed in Grecian gods. An identification with a supposed pre-historic king, about whom nothing is known, is no identification at all. On the other hand, all that is known about Alexander the Great shows that he was a man of lofty ideals. He died over three centuries before the time of Jesus, but that does not mean that he was not a man of faith, for God revealed Himself to men of all nations in all ages. Alexander was a disciple of the philosopher Aristotle, noted for his pursuit of sound truth in all departments of thought. Socrates spoke of the Grecian gods, and so did Aristotle and Plato; but it would be wrong to call them idolaters or men without Faith. In the Ethiopic traditional stories of Alexander the Great, he is represented as a great prophet.

Another suggestion made is that Zulqarnain was an ancient king of Persia. A king of Persia is referred to as a Ram with two horns in the Book of Daniel (8:3) in the Old Testament. But in the same Book, the Ram with two horns was

smitten, cast down to the ground, and stamped upon by a he-goat with one horn (8:7,8). There is nothing in our literature to suggest that Zulqarnain came to any such ignominious end. Nor is the Book of Daniel an authority worth consideration. Its authenticity is very doubtful. There is no question that it is a patch-work, as parts of it are in the Aramaic (or Chaldee) language and parts in Hebrew, and there are in it a number of Greek words. The Septuagint version contained large editions. "Daniel" — whoever the writer or writers were — refers to historical Persian kings. If it is argued that it was some old pre-historic Persian king who built the Iron Gates (Al-Quran 18:96) to keep out the Gog and Magog tribes (18:94), this is no identification at all. There is no unanimity about the identity of the Iron Wall, or the Gog and Magog tribes.

Another suggestion made is that it was some old pre-historic Himyarite king from Yeme, about whom nothing else is known. This, again, is no identification at all.

The question of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) and the iron barrier build to keep them out is of some interest. It is practically agreed that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia which have made inroads on the settled kingdoms and Empires at various stages of the world's history. The Chinese Empire suffered from their incursions and built the Great Wall of China to keep out the Manchus and Mongols. The Persian Empire suffered from them at various times and at various points. Their incursions into Europe on large hordes caused migrations and displacements of population on an

enormous scale, and eventually broke up the Roman Empire. These tribes were known vaguely to the Greeks and Romans as "Scythians".

If we could locate the iron barrier or iron gates referred to in the Holy Qur'an (18:96)? We should have a closer idea of the tribes whom the barrier was meant to keep out. It is obvious that the great wall of China is out of question. Begun in the third century B.C and continued later, it covers the enormous length of 1500 miles, and goes up the hills and down the valleys, with towers 40 feet high at intervals of 200 yards. Its average height is 20 to 30 feet. It is built of stone and earth. There is no particular point in it which can be identified with the iron barriers in the text. No one has suggested that Zulqarnain was a Chinese Emperor, and none of the great Conquerors of Western Asia can be credited with the building of the Chinese Wall.

The barrier in the text must have been more in the nature of iron gates than an iron wall. Two iron gates geographically far apart, have been suggested in the alternative. Sometimes they have been mixed up by writers not strong in geography. Both of them have local associations with the name of Alexander the Great. Both are near a town Derbend, and have borne the name of Babul-hadid (Arabic for Iron Gate)

The best known in modern times is at the town and seaport of Derbend in the middle of the western coast of the Caspian Sea. It is now in the Soviet territory, in the district of Daghistan. Before the Southern expansion of Russia in 1813 it belonged to

Persia. A spur of Mount Caucasus here comes up north, close to the sea. The wall in question is 50 miles long, with an average height of 29 feet. As Azerbaijan (in Persia) is not far from this place? Some writers have mixed up the Derbend iron Gate with Azerbaijan, and some with the Caucasian town of Kharz (Kars), which is to the south of the Caucasus. There are local traditions here, and in the Astrakhan region, at the mouth of the river Volga, higher up the Caspian, connecting this Caucasian iron gate with the name of Alexander, but there are good reasons why we should reject this as the site of the iron gate in the Qur'anic story. (1) This does not correspond exactly to the description in (18:96) "the space between the two steep mountain sides; the gap is between the mountain and the sea. (2) Alexander the Great (assuming that Zulqarnain is Alexander), is not known to have crossed the Caucasus. (3) There is an iron Gate which corresponds exactly to the description, in a locality which we know Alexander to have visited. (4) In the early days, when Muslims spread to all parts of the world, local legends were started by ignorant people connecting the places they knew with places referred to in the Qur'an.

We now come to the Iron Gate which corresponds exactly to the Qur'anic description, and has the best claim to be connected with Alexander's story. It is near another Derbend in Central Asia, Hissar District, about 150 miles south-east of Bukhara. A very narrow defile, with overhanging rocks, occurs on the main route between Turkestan and India; latitude 38 N; longitude 67E. It is now called in Turki Buzghol-Khana (Goat-house), but

was formerly known as the Iron Gate (Arabic, Bab-al-Hadid); Persian, Dar-i-Ahani; Chinese, T'ie-men-kuan). There is no iron gate there now, but there was one in the seventh century, when the Chinese traveller Hiouen Tsiang saw it on his journey to India. He saw two folding gates cased with iron and hung with bells. Near by is a lake named Iskandar Kul, connecting the locality with Alexander the Great. We know from history that Alexander, after his conquest of Persia and before his journey to India, visited Sogdiana (Bukhara) and Maracanda (Samarqand). We also know from Muqaddasi, the Arab traveller and geographer, who wrote about A.H. 375 (A.D. 985-6) that the Abbasi Khalifa Wathiq (842-846 A.D) sent out a mission to Central Asia to report on this Iron Gate. They found the defile 150 yards wide: on two jambs made with bricks of iron welded together with molten lead, were hung two huge gates, which were kept closed. Nothing could correspond more exactly with the description in (18:95, 96).

If, then, the Barrier in (18:95-98) refers to the Iron Gate near Bukhara, we are able to proceed to a consideration of the Gog-Magog People with some confidence. They were the Mongol tribes on the other side of the Barrier, while the industrious men who do not understand Zul-Qarnain's language were the Turks, with their agglutinative language, so different from the languages then spoken in Western Asia. The Barrier served its purpose for the time being. But the warning that the time must come when it must crumble to dust has also come true. It has crumbled to dust. Long since, the Mongols pushed through on their westward journey, pushing the Turks before them, and the Turks

became a European power and have still a footing in Europe. We need not bother about the legends of the Gog and Magog people. They were reputed to be giants, and two tiny hills in the flat Cambridgeshire are derisively called the Gog-Magog hills. Similarly the statues of Gog and Magog in the Guildhall in London only remind us how legends are apt to grow and get transported to strange places. In the Alexander legends of medieval Europe, Gog and Magog are said to have come with 400,000 men to the help of Porus whom Alexander defeated and to have fled after that defeat. They fled to the mountains, and Alexander built a wall with brass gates to prevent their interruption's.

Personally, I have not the least doubt that Zulqarnain is meant to be Alexander the Great, the historic Alexander, and not the legendary Alexander. I have studied the details of Alexander's extraordinary personality in Greek historians as well as in modern writers, and have since visited most of the localities connected with his brief but brilliant career. Few readers of Quranic literature have had the same privilege of studying the details of his career. It is one of the wonders of the Qur'an, that, spoken through an Ummy's mouth, it should contain so many incidental details which are absolutely true. The more our knowledge increases, the more we feel this. There are little touches which need not have been mentioned. They come in incidentally like the incidental remarks of a person full of knowledge, who does not intend to put forward those points but whose fulness of knowledge brings them in inevitably.

One such point occurs in the mention of Alexander's westward journey (18:86).

He saw the sun set in a piece of murky water which is described as a "Spring". Most commentators have understood the spring to be the sea, and the murky water to be its dark-blue water. Nizami, in his "Romance of Alexander, takes Alexander right west along North Africa to Andalusia and the Atlantic ocean. There is no historic proof that Alexander ever reached the Atlantic. But he was of course familiar with the deep-blue waters of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean interpretation may pass if we had not a closer explanation. Alexander's first exploits were when he was a mere boy, in the reign of his father Philip. The region of Illyricum was due west of Macedonia, and Macedonia's first expansion was in that direction. The town of Lychnis was annexed to Macedonia and thus the western frontier of Macedonia was secured. The northern frontier towards the Danube had already been secured, and the lesson he subsequently gave to Thebes secured him against attack from the Greek states to the south, and prepared the way for his great march east against the Persian Empire. To the West of the town of Lychnis is a lake 170 square miles in area, fed by underground springs that issue through limestone rocks and give out murky water. Both town and lake are now called Ochrida, about 50 miles West of Monastir. The water is so dark that the river which forms the outlet of the lake to the north is called the Black Drin. Looking at the sunset from the town, the observer would see the sun set in a pool of murky water (18:86). It was a question before the boy Alexander — the dreamy, impulsive, fearless rider — whether he would put the barbarous Illyricans to the sword or show them mercy. He showed true discrimination and statesmanship.

MINARET

He punished the guilty but showed kindness to the innocent, and thus consolidated his power in the West. This I construe to be the meaning of (18:86, 87); otherwise these verses do not seem to be perfectly clear.

Another point may be noted. The three episodes mentioned are the journey to the West, the journey to the East, and the journey to the Iron Gate. The journey to the West I have just explained. The journey to the East was to the Persian Empire. Here he found a people who lived in the open and wore little clothing. This might apply to people who live in an inland place in the latitude of Persepolis or Multan. He left them alone as they were (18:91). He was not warring against populations: he was warring against the proud but effete Persian Empire. He left them as they were, with their local institutions, and under their local chiefs. In feeling he treated them as his own, not as aliens. In some things he himself adopted their ways. His followers misunderstood him. But God understood, for He approves of all things that lead to Unity among mankind.

The direction of the third journey is not mentioned. The commentators suggest the north, but they might with better reason have suggested the south, as Alexander visited Egypt. But the visit to the Iron Gate was to the East — a continuation of his journey to East. That is why the direction is not mentioned again. Here his mission was different. He had to protect a peaceful industrious population, whom perhaps the Persian Empire had failed to protect, against turbulent and restless invaders. He helped them to protect themselves, but warned them that all human precautions, though good and

necessary, are vain without God's help.

Each of the episodes mentioned is historical. But the pomp and glitter of military conquest are not mentioned. On the contrary spiritual motives are revealed and commended. We need not know or learn any history or geography or science or psychology or ethics to understand them. But the more real knowledge we have, the more completely shall we understand them and the lessons to be drawn from them. The earthly journeys are treated as mere symbols to show us the evolution of a great and noble soul which achieved so much in a short earthly life.

His career was so extraordinary that it impressed his contemporaries as a world event, as it undoubtedly was — one of the greatest world-events in history. Legends began to grow up round his name. In many cases the legends overlaid the history. Today the world is thrilled by Sir Aurel Stein's identification of Aornos, a very small geographical detail in a great career full of lessons, in political, ethical, and religious wisdom. But the generations immediately following Alexander's period wrote and transmitted all sorts of wonderful

legends that passed current in East and West. The philosopher Kallisthenes had been with Alexander in Asia. Under his name was produced a Greek book in Alexandria some time before the second century of the Christian era. It was translated into Latin in the third century. Translations were subsequently made into most of the European languages. In Chaucer's time (1340- 1400) these Alexander legends were known to every "wight that hath discrecion".

Alexandria was a focus of Christian and Jewish learning for some centuries. The Christians also made Alexander a saint. The Jews carried the Alexander cycle into East. Our Persian poet Jami (A.H. 535-599, A.D. 1141 - 1203) worked it up into his epic the "Iskandar-Nama". He is careful to show the historical or semi-historical and the ethical parts separately. The one relates to action or exploits (Iqbal) and the other to wisdom (Khirad). He had the advantage of the Qur'an story before him. That story mentions three historical episodes incidentally, but draws our attention to matters of the weightiest spiritual significance, and that is the chief thing to note in the story.

*Evil is that for which they sell their
souls; that they should disbelieve in that which
Allah hath revealed, grudging that Allah should
reveal of His bounty unto whom He will of His
bondmen. They have incurred anger upon anger. For
Disbelievers is a shameful doom.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:90)*

HOW HOLY IS PALESTINE TO MUSLIMS?

By
Dr. Rauf

A religious shrines may be defined as "a place of some religious value to a given people, held by them in sentimental esteem and promotion veneration". Such a value may derive from the fact that the place assigned as a house of worship and devotion; or from the fact that it had witnessed an historical religious experience; or from its association with an historical holy figure, be it a Prophet, a saint or a scholar of religion.

On the other hand, Islam is a faith that asserts to be a religion revealed from Heaven: and shares with Judaism and Christianity their original ideas and ideals.

Islam is based on the belief in the Supreme Being, the Almighty Allah, the one, invisible and indivisible, all power and all knowledge, Who is Eternal, the First and the Last, Who is Unique and nothing resembles Him: and He is neither contained in time nor in space.

Islam also stresses a belief in God's Messengers, the Holy Prophets. One if those who enjoys a high place of honour in Islam is the Prophet Abraham who is described in the Holy Qur'an as the Khalil "the close friend", of God. He was alone when he called for the worship of Almighty God. He destroyed the idols which were worshipped by his people and was, therefore, persecuted and thrown into fire. God saved him and blessed him. At an advanced age, he was blessed with a number of children, prominent among them were Isma'il (Ishmael) who settled in Arabia and Isaac who stayed in the Holy Land with

his mother Sarah. Both Ishmael and Isaac were blessed men and became Prophets and Messengers of God. Isaac, in turn, was blessed with a son Jacob or Israel, who also became one of God's Messengers. His story and the story of his children, especially Joseph, are told in a most charming and noble style in the Holy Qur'an.

Another personality held in great esteem in Islam and counted, like Noah and Abraham, amongst the five topmost Holy Prophets is Moses. The story is told of his birth in Egypt where his people were severely persecuted by its ruler at that time, who ordered the slaying of all their male babies. Nevertheless, Moses was miraculously spared, and was cared for in the household of the Pharaoh himself. When he attained maturity, Moses called for the worship of the true God alone, contrary to the claims of the haughty Pharaoh. In the course of dispute, Moses miraculously defeated the expert magicians of the Pharaoh and won them to his side. Finally, Moses was able, with the help of God, to deliver his people from the tyranny of the Pharaoh into the way to the promised Holy Land. The sea was split upon to them, to make a dry platform for them to cross, the Pharaoh and his men who followed them were drowned. Moses' hope to reach the promised Holy Land was frustrated owing to the disobedience of his own people. They feared its inhabitants, and said to Moses: "Go, you and your Lord to fight. As for us, we are to settle herein". The Qur'an relates.

However, they were able later to conquer the blessed city of Jerusalem under the leadership of David who made it the seat of his kingdom and who was also a Prophet and Messenger of God. His throne was inherited by his son Solomon who was blessed with wisdom, with singular power and with divine Prophethood.

Another great personality held in the greatest esteem and veneration in Islam, whose name is also associated with the Holy Land, is Jesus Christ who was miraculously born to Virgin Mary who had had no husband and was never touched by a man. She is regarded in Islam as the best and most virtuous women ever created. The story of the birth of Jesus, his talk when he was still in the cradle, his mission, his preaching, his persecution and his deliverance is described in the Holy Qur'an.

All these venerated figures and many others like them, may the peace and all the blessings of God be upon them lived and suffered in the Holy Land. Therein they were born, they grew, they preached, they knelt in prayers, they died or were killed and their noble remains are contained therein. The soil of the Holy Land is mixed with their noble blood.

The verses of the Quran which describe the service and achievement of these noblest and most pious of men, are recited by millions of adherents of Islam daily and almost hourly, in a most inspiring manner. Thus the love and veneration of these holy men and the veneration of the land which was the seat and arena of their work, struggle and devotion, is ever fresh and ever renewed in the minds and hearts of the Muslim people.

It is to Muslims alone that the whole of

the Holy Land is dear and sacred, because it is they who hold that their faith is a continuation and incorporation of all the religions of the past, and it is they who are obliged by their faith to respect the rights of the adherents of these preceding religions.

Two particular places however, deserve a special mention and a special emphasis. One is the town of Al Khalil (Hebron) and the other is the city of Jerusalem, especially the area known as al-Haram al-Sharif.

Muslim tradition goes that when Abraham's wife, Sarah, died, he sought to find a place for her burial. He was led to a cave in Hebron which he purchased from Affron, its owner. Then he carried the body of his beloved wife and laid her to rest in the cave. When he himself died later, he was buried beside her. Then followed the noble remains of Isaac and Jacob and their wives; and this place became one of the oldest burial grounds, deeply venerated by Muslims who refer to the enclosure as al-Haram al-Ibrahimi, "The Sacred Mosque of Abraham." Muslim rulers in succeeding generations built, repaired and improved the area, and generously made endowments to ensure an efficient, sufficient and worthy maintenance of the Holy Place. Muslims make visits to the Haram and recite prescribed prayers.

A Muslim intending to pay a visit to Abraham, (peace be upon him), is expected first to repent sincerely from his sins, and recite prayers for the Prophets Abraham and Mohammed, peace be upon them, all the time while he is on his way.

On reaching the Mosque, he halts a little in humility and then entering the mosque with his right foot first, recites:

"In the name of God, O Lord! Bestow Your blessings upon the Prophet Mohammed and open the gates of Your mercy to me."

After performing two rak'ats of prayers in the honour of the mosque he then approaches the tomb of Sayyidina Abraham (peace be upon him) and standing with a lowered head, prays for God's forgiveness.

He is recommended to go then to the window of our master Abraham al-Khalil, peace and blessings be upon him which is in front of that of our master Jacob, and stand by, greeting and paying and then conclude by praying for all the Messengers and Prophets of God.

Coming now to Jerusalem and al-Haram at-Sharif, the blessed Prophet Mohammed was once asked: which was the earliest Mosque? The Prophet answered, al-Masjid al-Haram; i.e. the sacred Mosque in Makkah. He was then asked, "which mosque was next?" He said, al-Masjid al-Aqsa, i.e. the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. He was further asked, "and how long was the interval between them?" The Prophet replied, "Forty years."

Muslim tradition, and the Qur'an assert that Abraham and Ishmael were the builders of al-Masjid al-Haram of Makkah. While building the Haram they repeat the words:

"Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. For Thou art the All-hearing, the All-Knowing."

"Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to thy Will), and of our progeny a Muslim people," bowing to Thy (Will); and show us our places for the celebration, of (due) rites: and turn unto us (in Mercy), for Thou art the

Oft-Returning. Most Merciful."

"Our Lord! send amongst them an Apostle of their own, who shall instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted in Might, The Wise".

The coming of the Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ), son of Abdullah, was the answer and fulfilment of their prayers. According to Muslim tradition Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, peace be upon them both, was the first builder of a mosque in the site of al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem.

Isaac, advised his son not to marry from the Canaanites but seek his spouse from amongst the family of his maternal uncle. When Jacob reached the site, now known as al-Haram al-Sharif, he felt exhausted and needed to rest. So he lay down and rested his head on a stone. During his sleep he saw as if there was a column of light arising from this place and reaching the gates of heaven. Disturbed and awakened, Jacob was commanded by a revelation to build a mosque at the same site. So the interval between the building of the Ka'ba by Abraham and Ishmael, and that of the Aqsa Mosque was of forty years.

By the time of the conquest of Jerusalem by David (peace be upon him) there was no trace of the prayer house erected by Jacob, and David was thus widely credited as the founder of the Aqsa Mosque, which was completed in great grave of "your father Abraham". Next time he was advised to dismount and pray; and was told: "You have prayed on the birth-place of your brother Jesus!"

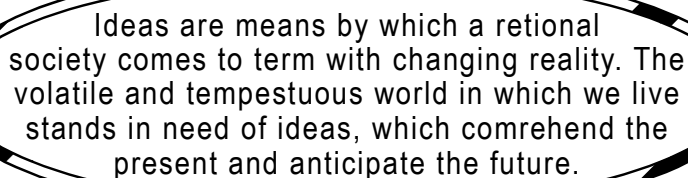
The al-Haram al-Sharif was thus the end point of the Prophet's Isra' as it was also the

starting point of his heavenly journey on the same night called mi'raj, and in this context the place has had the special distinction of a mention in the Holy Qur'an, a privilege denied to any other mosque except that of Makkah.

It was because of this special place and sanctity that Umar the great, the second Caliph bowed to the request of the Patriarch Sophronius and came all the way from Medinah to receive personally the keys of the city. The first thing the great Caliph did after signing a peace treaty with the Patriarch was to seek to find the site of the house of God; whose foundations were laid by the prophets respected and loved by all Muslims. The site when discovered had centuries of the garbage piled over it. As the garbage was removed and the sacred rock appeared, 'Umar (RDA) immediately began to clean it with his own apparel; and all those present from amongst the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) joined in the task. Umar (RDA) ordered that the sacred rock henceforth shall never be desecrated and that a fence should be desecrated and that a fence should come, and on the Caliph's request, the renowned Bilal,

the Prophet's mu'adhdhin recited the adhan, "Call to prayer", for the first time since the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Umar (RDA) and the other Companions present could not hold back their tears! 'Umar (RDA) then led the prayers a little further from the stone where the Mosque of 'Umar was soon built and became popularly known as al-Aqsa Mosque. As an act of veneration, a splendid dome was built over the rock by the Ummayyad Caliph Abd al Malik bin Marwan. The title al-Aqsa in the Qur'an and Hadith, however, refers to the whole area.

It will be a grave error, however, to think that the religious sanctity for Muslims is confined to certain given sites in the holy land, although the concept of sanctity may be a matter of degree. All Muslim properties and possessions, particularly the house of worship, the inalienable religious endowments as well as Muslim cementries in which the remains of Companions and of men of knowledge and noblemen lie, like the cemetery of Manila, are objects of religious sanctity, and their protection is the collective responsibility of all Muslims.



Ideas are means by which a retional society comes to term with changing reality. The volatile and tempestuous world in which we live stands in need of ideas, which comrehend the present and anticipate the future.

Islam and Muslims in the Twenty-First Century:

Muzaffar Iqbal

Islam and Muslims have faced many challenges in their long history, but the challenge faced by Islam and its more than one billion followers in the 21st century are unlike anything witnessed before. These challenges are unique both in their nature as well as their scope; this uniqueness arises from a number of factors.

It is for the first time in their history that Muslims find themselves so dispersed on this planet that hardly a place remains where small or large communities of believers cannot be found. This geographical spread has created many unique challenges not only for the diaspora but also for those regions which have been the traditional home of Muslims for over or close to a millennium. This is so because the presence of sizable Muslim communities outside their traditional lands has created dynamic interactions between them, their new homelands and "back-home". The impact of this migration has been considerable, even though the size of these communities outside the historical geographical limits of the Muslim world, established in the last major redrawing of world maps in the sixteenth century, is small compared to those who still live within these boundaries. A major reason for this is the fact that a large majority of migrants have chosen Europe, the United Kingdom and North America as their new home. This geographical region, which is now home to the Western civilization, has a large footprint in the world today and hence the presence of Muslim

communities in the heart of this civilization has produced entirely new dynamics in the centuries-old interaction between Islam and the West.

A second and much more important reason for the uniqueness of contemporary challenges to Islam and Muslims stem from the technological advances that have brought the "fruits" of the scientific and industrial revolution to their doorsteps. Invented for quite a different culture, and arising from the internal needs of the western societies, hundreds of new technologies have arrived in the Muslim world during the last fifty years; these have reshaped and redefined life pattern at a very large scale, giving birth to new modes of social and cultural activities their arrival has also been accompanied by changes in worldviews. The main intent of this new thought was to establish a Kingdom of Man on Earth. This revolution in thought, which occurred in Europe alongside the second Scientific Revolution of the eighteenth century generated myriad forms of social, philosophical, economic and political currents that were rooted in a worldview from which God has been abstracted at various levels.

This worldview, rooted solely in the here and now and in complete forgetfulness of the Hereafter, continues to govern life and thought in the West. It has produced various currents of thought which have given birth to a host of "isms" during the last three centuries. This includes humanism, romanticism,

feminism, and a multitude of others, all of which have had their day in the making and unmaking of the West. The twin revolutions in thought and sciences have also given birth to numerous "mini-revolutions" which have affected all domains of knowledge. These currents are sometimes collectively called modernity, though the precise definition of this ubiquitous word remains controversial. In any case, it is the encounter with these new currents in thought that have created the most important challenge now faced by Islam and Muslims.

There are numerous dimensions of these challenges that have economic, social, political, scientific and technological implications. Driven by an incessant desire to gain power and influence over the entire human habitate, these new currents have been able to create a niche in the Muslim world through myriad means, and a sizeable number of Muslims have been won over by a modernity whose claim to superiority rests on its self-assessment as the most "advanced" and "productive" phase of human civilization. It is this self-assessment, along with the economic, military and political power of the West, that is mainly responsible for the emergence of its standards of judging all other civilizations and worldviews.

Whether one agrees with Samuel Huntington or not, it is obvious that after the demise of Communism as a viable ideology, western civilization has no other challenge to face but that of Islam. This does not necessarily lead to a clash of civilizations, but there is something poignantly true in Huntington's formulation, though he does not built his case on the real foundation upon which the two civilizations divert. The foundational

difference between the Islamic and the contemporary western civilizations is that the former attempts to create the kingdom of God on Earth while the latter is a bold attempt to establish a kingdom of Man. In the former, limits of human action are framed by the boundaries established by Allah; in the later, even the idea of limits is an anathema. In the former, the ultimate goal of this earthly life is to prepare for the Hereafter in the latter, the very concept of Hereafter is a dogma. Various currents have now poised these diametrically opposed worldviews against each other at a scale never before witnessed; this has also created numerous challenges for Islam and Muslims.

Conversely, there is a reciprocal current that has produced an enhanced awareness of Islam in the West. This enhanced awareness and the need to answer numerous questions about Islam is mainly responsible for a new wave of publications. A survey of books on Islam and Muslims published in the West during the last two years reveals an astonishing aspect of these publications: a large number of these new works, which range from studies on classical Islamic heritage to various contemporary issues, conduct an incessant search for a self-created myth of some kind of "wrong" which has produced contemporary Islamic polity, presumably writing in the backwaters of history. Thus we have, for instance, 'what went wrong' of Bernard Lewis, whose infamous theories on Islam and Muslims have achieved the status of a school of thought. Then there is an organised effort to investigate 'Madaris' and their curriculum, issues related to women and family life-- all seen from the peculiar perspective of western humanism.

This "scholarship" is not in vain. It goes hand in hand with the new political, military and economic realities of our times which are attempting to redraw the map of the world in all aspects -- from cultural to economic. This wave of new publications is in sync with the attempts to create a global village in which the most dominant and aggressive civilization of the day will be able to weed out all other civilizations by sheer force of its economic and technological power. This roadmap to a monochromatic world has a new intellectual component that aims at conquering hearts and the minds and an effective means to export "freedom" and "liberty".

This large-scale effort to hollow out Islamic tradition from within has met with very little effective scholarship from the Muslim world. There is an atmosphere of stagnation in Islamic intellectual space; one does not need years of research to discover this. Just a quick survey of publications is enough to reveal the extent of this siesta. Even without the new global effort to divest Islam of its essential inner realities, there was already a pressing task for the Muslim scholars; to understand that terrible phase of Muslim history during which almost the entire Ummah was colonized. But there is no organised agenda of research, no planned effort to meet the challenges of the new century. There are hardly any institutions in the Muslim world which are devoted to understanding the new emerging global realities. There are no teams of scholars devoted to the painstaking task of the reconstruction of Islamic thought.

The new challenges require a dynamic, well-designed research agenda that is shared by a large number of Muslim

scholars who are willing to dedicate their lives to a process of revival and reconstruction. The following presents some preliminary thoughts on various aspects of a research agenda that needs to be organized by Muslim scholars.

Islamic Tradition

Various historical currents of the past three centuries have produced an Ummah in the twenty-first century which lacks the basic means to tap the vast resources of its own tradition. More than two-thirds of contemporary Muslims do not speak Arabic and in lands where Arabic is still the language of daily use, its classical heritage has become inaccessible to a large majority. This is one of the most important impacts of the colonization of the Muslim world. The true care for this is, of course the revival of Arabic as a living language, understood by a large number of Muslims.

Islamic Perspective on the West

Compared to Western views on Islam and Muslims, one finds very little reflection by Muslim scholars on various aspects of the Western civilization. The absence of scholarly reflection on this civilization has given liberties to the likes of Bernard Lewis who would not even think of the possibility that question such as "What Went Wrong" might really be asked about a civilization that has brought the entire human race to the brink of a global catastrophe. An organized effort is, thus, needed to understand the emergence of the contemporary western civilization and various forces which govern it today. The contemporary western civilization has emerged out of two transforming revolutions: the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century and the revolution

in thought that accompanied it. The latter, sometimes called Humanism or Enlightenment, replaced the orientation of the West from a God-oriented civilization to a man-centred civilization. Muslim scholars also need to have a well-planned research agenda to study these twin revolutions which have produced the contemporary West.

Research and Publications for the Next Generation of Muslims

Perhaps the most apparent sign of the failure of Muslim scholars can be seen in the emergence of western-style education institutions in the Muslim world. From Jeddah to Jakarta, one can find these institutions inculcating a non-Islamic worldview in the minds of Muslim children of the new millennium. This has already produced a generation of Muslims which is uprooted from the spiritual and intellectual soil of their forefathers. This new generation has been left in the hands of the merchants of the education because states have shunned responsibilities and because the Muslim intelligentsia has failed to produce new educational resources suitable for the needs of the new generation growing up with laptops and internet. True, there have been a few efforts in this direction. There has been a movement of "Islamization of knowledge". There have

been important conferences on education and many individuals have made efforts to produce educational material. But these are ineffectual efforts as one can see by visiting a grade eight classroom in any of these pseudo-western schools and looking at the text books being used.

This is neither a limited issue nor a minor problem. The entire field of education needs a renewed commitment. This is not only the need of the sizeable Muslim communities now living in the West; it is also the need of children growing up in Lahore and Istanbul. Thus, the need of the hour is a very well-designed project of research, aimed at producing a large number of educational resources for the new generation which cover the entire spectrum of knowledge. This is an effort that requires an Ummah-level institute especially devoted to this cause and with all the material resources required to produce results.

These preliminary thoughts are intended to invite Muslim scholars to propose such outlines. The need is there and a large number of Muslim scholars are already aware of it. But there is a vacuum in terms of institutional framework and leadership. An urgent and organized effort is needed now or it may be too late. *(Courtesy: Islamic Studies, Vol. 42, No. 3)*



NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudis happiest of all Arabs: Survey

Saudis are the happiest people of all Arabs and rank 26th among the happiest people in the world, according to a study released recently by the World Values Survey, a global network of social scientists based at the University of Michigan.

The yardstick of happiness according to the study was the contentment of a people with their living standard. The participants were asked questions such as if they were very happy, happy or not at all happy. The study ranked the Danes first among the people from 97 countries, while Zimbabwe came at the bottom. The United States got 16th position and Guatemala came 17th. Among the Arab countries that figured in the list, Jordan came 57th, Morocco 68th, Algeria 72nd and Egypt 74th. While the Danes scored 4.24 points, Saudis got 3.17 points. Zimbabwe was the glummiest country in the world followed by Armenia, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Albania, Iraq and Bulgaria which were among the last 10. Israel was placed at 45th position, Turkey at 60th and Iran at 64th.

The report also noted that several countries registered improvement in their happiness compared to the past years. They included India, China, Ireland, South Korea and Mexico. On the other hand, Britons, Belgians, Austrians and Germans are no longer as happy as they were in the past.

The survey also exploded the myth that freedom and sense of peace and

security are the determining factors in making one happy. It said several Latin American countries such as Colombia, which is plagued by fighting, came at the third place in the list. El Salvador and Guatemala came 11th and 17th respectively. On the other hand, France was placed at 37th position and Italy at 46th.

Omani Scholar says Organ Donations not permissible in Islam

Organ donation, including eyes, is not permitted in Islam, said an Omani Islamic scholar, who sees no harm in donating blood even in Ramadan. "There are three schools of thought on organ donations by Muslims, but the majority of Islamic scholars believe that organ donation is not permissible in Islam," Shaikh Khalfan Al Esry, a member of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque's Steering Committee for Islamic Information Centre, told Gulf News in an interview. Blood donation, he stressed, was different, as it is replenished. He said that a minority group of scholars believe organ donation was permissible while some would like to leave it to the individual to decide. "Our body is sacred and a dead body is respected in Islam and there's no need to scavenge it for organ donations," Al Esry said. "We handle the body with care and give privacy to it by covering it while taking it for burial. Then how can we think of removing its parts?" he said. Removing organs for donation, he reckons, amounts to disrespecting the dead. Al Esry also argued that an individual doesn't own his or her body. "It is a gift of God and in Islam

an individual can neither harm his or her own self physically, mentally nor spiritually.

Germany's largest mosque in Cologne

Cologne City Council has voted in favor of building Germany's largest mosque despite a fierce opposition from right-wing groups. "We are building this for all the people of Cologne, not just Muslims," said the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) in a statement. The city council voted to allow Muslim groups to build the mosque in Cologne's Ehrenfeld district. DITIB has agreed not to broadcast *Adhan* over loudspeakers. Germany is home to some 3.2 million Muslims, over half of whom are of Turkish origin. There are now 159 mosques in Germany. "I think the new mosque will be such an architectural masterpiece that tour buses will take people to see it after they visit the Cologne Cathedral," said Josef Wirges, local council member for Ehrenfeld and member of the Social Democrats (SPD).

Conversion of Islam ratio rises

For the first time ever, more than 1,000 Germans have converted to Islam in 12 months, the director of the German-based Islam-Archive Central Institute Salim Abdullah announced on Dec 13.

Some 1,152 Germans have converted to Islam between May 2004 and May 2005.

Abdullah could not pinpoint the exact

reason as to why there are this many Islam converts.

Interestingly enough, whenever the media attack Islam, more people convert to Islam than in normal years, Abdullah said.

More than 60 per cent of those who convert are woman, most of them single and well educated, he added.

According to statistics released by his institute in May 2005, some 14,352 out of 3.2 million Muslims in Germany are of German-origin. –By special arrangement.

Pope Values Quran as Precious

Pope Benedict XVI has paid reverence to the Quran and termed it as precious. Issues discussed about faith and reason in Christianity and Islam were very important and need consideration, said the Pope in a meeting with Mahdi Mostafavi, head of Iran's high-ranking visiting delegation to the Vatican.

For his part, head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Mahdi Mostafavi responded that there is an overwhelming need for faith and reason now, compared to the past. Mostafavi also voiced Tehran's readiness to promote cultural and religious cooperation between Iran and the Vatican and offered Pope a copy of the Quran.





الوفاق العالمي للدعوة الاسلاميه

کی دینی تحریک کے

اغراض و مقاصد

- ۱ ایسے صاحبان بصیرت و باکردار علمائے دین تیار کرنا جو دینی علوم اور افکارِ حاضرہ کے جامع بن کر اور اسلافِ صالحین کے نقش قدم پر چل کر دورِ حاضر کے تقاضوں کی روشنی میں اسلام کی ہدایت کو اطراف و اکنافِ عالم میں اور مشرقی و مغربی زبانوں میں پیش کر سکیں۔ اس مقصد کے حصول کے لئے الجامعة العلمیة الاسلامیة ۱۹۶۳ء سے منظم اسلوب پر دینی تعلیم کا مقدس فریضہ انجام دے رہا ہے۔ اس ادارہ میں نہ صرف پاکستان بلکہ دیگر ممالک کے طلباء بھی زیرِ تعلیم رہے ہیں۔ طلباء میں مستحق افراد کو ماہانہ فی کس ۱۵۰ روپے وظیفہ دیا جاتا ہے۔ اس کا رخیہ میں آپ کی اعانت مطلوب ہے۔
- ۲ دورِ حاضر کے فلسفہ، سائنسی علوم اور عمرانی علوم کی جانب سے جو نئے مسائل افقِ انسانیت پر ابھرے ہیں، ان کو کتاب و سنت اور افکارِ اسلافِ صالحین کی روشنی میں حل کرنا اور بصورتِ مطبوعات نشر کرنا۔ اس مقدس مقصد کیلئے ادارہ تحقیق و مطبوعات اسلامی قائم کیا گیا ہے۔ الحمد للہ ہماری بلند پایہ تبلیغی کتابیں جو بیشتر انگریزی زبان میں ہیں، دنیا میں عظیم مقبولیت حاصل کر چکی ہیں، نیز دنیا کی مختلف زبانوں میں اُن کے تراجم کی اشاعت ہو رہی ہے۔ اردو میں دینی مطبوعات مزید برآں ہیں۔
- ۳ عوام کی ذہنی و اخلاقی تربیت کے لئے انگریزی زبان میں ۱۹۶۳ء سے ایک تبلیغی ماہنامہ "THE MINARET" (المنار) شائع ہو رہا ہے جو دنیا کے تقریباً ۷۰ ممالک میں اسلام کا پیغام پہنچا رہا ہے۔
- ۴ طالبانِ علم کی خدمت کے لئے المرکز الاسلامی میں "قادر یہ دارالمطالعو کتب خانہ" قائم ہے جس میں عربی، اردو، انگریزی اور دیگر زبانوں میں دینی اور متعلقہ کتب فراہم کی گئی ہیں، نیز ۵۰ سے زائد روزنامے، ہفتہ وار اخبار، ماہنامے اور سالنامے مہیا کئے جاتے ہیں۔
- ۵ طلباء کے لئے ایک نہایت عمدہ دارالافتاء ۱۹۶۵ء سے قائم ہے۔ مقیم طلباء کیلئے ہر طرح کی سہولت کے علاوہ طبی امداد بھی مفت دی جاتی ہے۔
- ۶ بچوں کو قرآن کریم اور ضروری دینی مسائل کی تعلیم کیلئے "دارالقرآن" اور "دارالحفظ" خدمت انجام دے رہا ہے۔
- ۷ شام کے اوقات میں لوگوں کو عربی اور انگریزی وغیرہ پڑھانے کے علاوہ کمپیوٹر کی تربیت کا انتظام بھی شامل منصوبہ ہے۔
- ۸ غریب، نادار اور ضرورت مند مریضوں کو طبی امداد دینے کے لئے شہر کے ۸ مختلف مقامات پر ہومیوپیتھک کام کر رہے ہیں۔
- ۹ Dr. F. R. Ansari Academy کے نام سے المرکز الاسلامی میں ایک باقاعدہ حکومت سے منظور شدہ سینڈری اسکول کام کر رہا ہے۔
- ۱۰ تمام مقامی منصوبے المرکز الاسلامی کراچی میں واقع ہیں۔ ان عظیم کاموں میں آپ کی اعانت کی ضرورت ہے۔

جدید مغربی عورتیں اسلام کی شاہراہ پر

ڈاکٹر امینہ کاکسن (انگلینڈ)

پڑا، اس طرح بچپن میں دو سال مجھے بھی اس مسلمان ملک میں مقیم رہنے کا موقع ملا اور غیر شعوری طور پر اہل مصر کی سماجی زندگی، عمومی اخلاق اور رسوم و رواج سے بہت متاثر ہوئی۔ قاہرہ کی خوبصورت مسجدوں، اُن کے میناروں اور خصوصاً اذان کی آواز نے میرے دل و دماغ پر گہرے اثرات مرتب کئے اور غیر محسوس طریقے سے میرا دل اُن کی طرف کھینچنا چلا گیا۔

1947ء میں، میں واپس انگلینڈ آگئی اور یہاں ایک پرائمری اسکول میں داخل کرا دی گئی۔ 1953ء میں میرے والد بھی مصر سے لندن آگئے اور اُن کی رہنمائی میں زندگی کے میدان میں آگے بڑھنے لگی۔ میں طبعاً سختی واقع ہوئی ہوں چنانچہ میں نے ہر امتحان میں نمایاں کامیابی حاصل کی اور MBBS کے بعد رائل کالج آف میڈیسن اور یونیورسٹی آف لندن سے نیورولوجی میں پوسٹ گریجویٹ ڈگری بھی حاصل کر لی۔ اس کے ساتھ ہی نفسیاتی تجزیے (Psychoanalytic) کا کورس بھی مکمل کر لیا۔ تعلیم سے فارغ ہونے کے بعد ڈاکٹر این کاکسن نے شادی کی۔ بچے بھی ہوئے لیکن بد قسمتی سے یہ شادی کامیاب نہ ہو سکی کہ اُن کا خاندان ایک مادہ پرست، خود غرض انسان تھا۔ وہ بیوی بچوں کو اخراجات کیلئے کچھ بھی نہ دیتا بلکہ اُلٹی دھونس جمتا رہتا، نتیجہ یہ کہ چند سال کے بعد

ڈاکٹر امینہ کاکسن کا آبائی نام این کاکسن ہے۔ وہ پیشے کے اعتبار سے ڈاکٹر اور ماہر علم اعصاب (Neurologist) ہیں اور لندن کے قلب یعنی ہارٹ اسٹریٹ میں اُن کا کلینک ہے، انہوں نے طویل مطالعہ اور غور و خوص کے بعد 1985ء میں اسلام قبول کیا۔ ریاض (سعودی عرب) میں مقیم مشہور پاکستانی مصنف جناب حنیف شاہد، نے اُن سے بذریعہ ڈاک قبول اسلام کی وجوہ دریافت کیں اور اپنی قابل قدر کتاب "Why Islam is Our Only Choice" میں محفوظ کر دیں۔ ذیل کا مضمون اسی انٹرویو کا آزاد ترجمہ ہے۔

میں 11 اکتوبر 1940ء کو لندن کے ایک کیتھولک گھرانے میں پیدا ہوئی۔ میری والدہ ایک امیر کیر باپ کی بیٹی تھیں جبکہ والد برٹش امریکن ٹوبیکو کمپنی کے ڈائریکٹر تھے۔ ہم دو بہن بھائی ہیں، دونوں نے کیتھولک بورڈنگ اسکولوں میں تعلیم حاصل کی۔ بھائی آج کل امریکہ میں ایک معروف تاجر ہے۔ اس کے تین بچے ہیں اور وہ کیتھولک عیسائی کی حیثیت سے آج بھی پابندی سے گرہے جاتا ہے۔

میرے والد کو ٹوبیکو کمپنی کی ملازمت کے سلسلے میں 1945ء سے 1953ء تک آٹھ سال کا عرصہ مصر میں گزارنا

انہوں نے اس شخص سے طلاق لے لی۔

1978ء میں ڈاکٹر موصوفہ نے لندن کے ہارٹ اسٹریٹ، جسے میڈیسن روڈ بھی کہا جاتا ہے، میں اپنا کلینک بنالیا اور پرائیوٹ پرنکس شروع کر دی۔ حسن اتفاق سے انہیں آغاز ہی میں چند مسلمان خواتین سے سابقہ پیش آیا اور وہ دیکھ کر بہت حیران ہوئیں کہ خطرناک امراض اور شدید تکلیف کی حالت میں بھی مسلمان خواتین کمال درجہ کی حوصلہ مندی کا مظاہرہ کرتی تھیں اور اس کا سبب خدائے واحد پر ان کا یقین و ایمان تھا۔ اس ضمن میں وہ بالخصوص دو خواتین سے بہت متاثر ہوئیں۔ اولاً ”ایک مسلمان لڑکی اپنی بیمار ماں کو لے کر ان کے کلینک میں آئی۔ ڈاکٹر نے ایسے ہی حفظِ مانعہ کے طور پر لڑکی کا معائنہ کیا تو پتہ چلا کہ وہ چھاتی کے کینسر میں مبتلا ہے، لیکن جب لڑکی کو اس خطرناک مرض کے بارے میں بتایا گیا تو اس نے برجستہ کہا ”الحمد للہ“ یہ اللہ کی حکمت ہے کہ میں آپ کے پاس آئی اور مجھ پر اس مرض کا انکشاف ہو گیا“

ڈاکٹر امینہ کے لئے یہ مشاہدہ بے حد حیران کن تھا کہ وہ لڑکی نہ گھبرائی نہ روئی نہ چلائی۔ اس نے کمالِ صبر اور حوصلے سے اللہ کا شکر ادا کیا اور اس یقین کا اظہار بھی کہ اللہ کے فضل سے وہ صحتیاب ہو جائے گی۔ لڑکی کے اس رویے سے ڈاکٹر بہت متاثر ہوئی، اس مذہب کے لئے اس کے دل میں بے اختیار نرم گوشہ پیدا ہونے لگا، جس سے ایک کمزور لڑکی کو حوصلہ اور صبر کی ایک خاص قوت سے روشناس کرا دیا تھا۔

اسی طرح 1983ء میں ان کا تعارف اومان کے

سلطان قابوس کی والدہ محترمہ سے ہوا۔ موصوفہ ذیابیطس کی مریضہ تھیں لیکن صبر، وقار اور حوصلہ مندی ان پر ختم تھی۔ وہ شاندار شخصیت کی حامل ایک خاتون تھیں، محبت، شفقت اور حلم کا پیکر مجسم بھی حالانکہ بے رحم مرض نے انہیں نچوڑ کر رکھ دیا تھا، لیکن اس کے باوجود ان کی زبان پر کبھی بھول کر بھی حرف شکایت نہ آیا۔ اس بزرگ بیمار خاتون کی روش نے بھی ڈاکٹر امینہ کا کسن کو غیر معمولی طور پر متاثر کیا اور اس حوصلہ سے وہ سنجیدگی کے ساتھ اسلام کے بارے میں سوچنے لگیں۔ اور کچھ عرصہ بعد مطالعہ اور غور و فکر کے بعد انہوں نے اسلام قبول کر لیا۔

اس سوال کے جواب میں انہوں نے اپنے آبائی مذہب عیسائیت کو کیوں ترک کر دیا؟ انہوں نے بتایا: ”میں آبائی طور پر کیتھولک تھی۔ والد اور والدہ دونوں کیتھولک تھے۔ مجھے بھی بچپن میں ایک کیتھولک اسکول میں داخل کرایا گیا جہاں میرے والد کی خالہ اور متعدد عم زاد (کزن) لڑکیاں ننون (Nuns) کی حیثیت سے خدمات انجام دے رہی تھیں۔ میں بھی بیس سال کی عمر تک اپنے آبائی عقائد پر سختی سے قائم رہی، لیکن جب غور و فکر کی عمر شروع ہوئی تو ان عقائد کے بارے میں شک و شبہات سر اٹھانے لگے۔ مضبوط دیواروں میں دراڑیں پیدا ہونے لگیں۔ چنانچہ یہ سوچ کر مجھے اپنے آپ سے نفرت ہونے لگتی ہے کہ یہ میرے بدترین گناہ تھے جن کی پاداش میں حضرت مسیح کو صلیب پر چڑھایا گیا اور وہ بہت ہی دردناک موت سے دوچار ہوئے۔ اسی طرح عشائے ربانی کے حوالے سے یہ تصور کر کے

مجھے بے اختیار گھٹن آنے لگی کہ یہ کھانا دارصل حضرت مسیحؑ کے گوشت اور اُن کے خون پر مشتمل ہے اور تثلیث کا مسئلہ تو مجھے بہت ہی پریشان رکھتا اور خدا کو تین حصوں میں منقسم دیکھ کر میں بھونچکا رہ جاتی۔ یہ سوچ کر بھی میں فکر مند رہتی کہ میں تو پیدائشی گناہگار ہوں پھر حضرت مسیحؑ سے کیسے محبت کا دم بھر سکتی ہوں۔ بائبل اور عیسائیت کے یہ عقائد میرے ذہن میں بھرے رہتے۔ جب بھی فارغ ہوتی ان پر غور کرنے لگتی اور الجھن سے میرا سر پھٹنے لگتا۔ بے اختیار سوچتی کہ یہ ساری باتیں تو سراسر بے بنیاد ہیں جن کا عقل یا فطرت سے دور کا بھی واسطہ نہیں، پھر زیادہ دیر تک ان سے وابستہ کیسے رہ سکتی ہوں؟ پھر خیال آتا کہ میں گمراہ تو نہیں ہو رہی ہوں کہیں میں اپنے مذہب سے دور تو نہیں جا رہی؟ پریشان ہو کر بے اختیار خدا سے دعا کرنے لگتی کہ ”خدا یا میری رہنمائی فرما“ حق کا راستہ مجھ پر کھول دے اگر تو نے میری دادرسی نہ کی تو میں تباہ ہو جاؤں گی، کہیں کی نہیں رہوں گی۔“

چنانچہ اللہ تعالیٰ نے میری دعا سن لی۔ میری دستگیری فرمائی اور سوتے میں یکے بعد دیگرے میں نے تین واضح خواب دیکھے۔ جن میں کوئی ابہام نہ تھا اور مجھے یقین ہو گیا کہ ہدایت کیلئے میری بے قراری اور تجسس کے نتیجے میں خدا میری رہنمائی کر رہا ہے۔ خواب میں مجھے بتایا گیا کہ (۱) اللہ تعالیٰ سے تعلق پیدا کرنے کے لئے مجھے کسی پادری کے سہارے کی ضرورت نہیں۔ (۲) اسلام ہی سچا دین اور سیدھا راستہ ہے۔ (۳) حضرت عیسیٰؑ اور حضرت محمد ﷺ آپس میں گہری یگانگت رکھتے ہیں، دونوں جنت میں اکٹھے

ہیں اور حضرت عیسیٰؑ نے مجھے حضرت محمد ﷺ کی تحویل میں دے دیا ہے۔

اس میں کوئی شبہ نہیں کہ میں تلاش حق میں بڑی پریشان اور مضطرب تھی تاہم یہ بھی خیال آتا تھا کہ مجھے اپنے آبائی مذہب سے دور نہیں ہونا چاہئے۔ لیکن متذکرہ خوابوں نے جس منزل کی طرف اشارہ کیا، وہ راستہ اسلام کا تھا۔ میری مسلمان مریضوں نے میرے دل میں اسلام کیلئے مزید نرم گوشہ پیدا کر دیا بالخصوص ان کا یہ عقیدہ کہ سب کچھ خدا کی طرف سے ہوتا ہے اور اس کے ہر کام میں کوئی نہ کوئی حکمت ضرور ہوتی ہے جبکہ اس کے برعکس یورپ میں لوگ اچھے کام کا کریڈٹ خود لیتے ہیں اور برے انجام کو خدا کی طرف منسوب کر دیا جاتا ہے۔

اس سلسلے میں بالخصوص اومان کے سلطان قابوس السعید کی والدہ محترمہ سے بے حد متاثر ہوئی۔ محترمہ میری مریضہ تھیں۔ ضعیفی اور صحت کی خرابی کے باوجود ہر ایک سے مسکرا کر باتیں اور ہر ضرورت مند پر گھلے دل سے دولت نچھاور کر دیتیں۔ وہ شدید تکلیف میں مبتلا تھیں لیکن اُنہوں نے کبھی شکوہ و شکایت کا انداز اختیار نہیں کیا، بلکہ بات بات پر اللہ کا شکر ادا کرتیں۔ اور جب میں پوچھتی کہ بیماری کی انتہائی تکلیف میں کون سی چیز اُنہیں اطمینان اور اُمید سے وابستہ کئے ہوئے ہے تو وہ احترام اور محبت کے گہرے احساس سے اللہ تعالیٰ کا نام لیتیں کہ وہ ذاتِ گرامی ہے جس کا فضل و کرم اُنہیں مایوس نہیں ہونے دیتا۔ وہ کمالِ یقین کے ساتھ فرماتیں اللہ تعالیٰ ”الرحمن الرحیم“ ہے وہی انسان کو طرح طرح کی نعمتوں سے

نوازتا ہے اور وہی کسی حکمت کے تحت تکلیف سے دوچار کرتا ہے۔ میں اس کی رضا پر راضی ہوں اور اپنی تکلیف سے پریشان نہیں ہوں۔ واقعاً سلطان قابوس کی والدہ محترمہ ایک مثالی مسلمان خاتون تھیں۔ انہوں نے مجھے اسلام کے بہت قریب کر دیا اگرچہ تین واضح خواب دیکھنے کے باوجود میں ابھی تک اپنے آپ کو اسلام پر آمادہ نہ کر پائی تھی۔ لیکن رمضان آیا تو میں موصوفہ محترمہ کی ترغیب پر روزے رکھنے لگی اور پہلی بار سچے روحانی سکون سے آشنا ہوئی۔ ایک سال اسی طرح گزر گیا۔ دوسرا رمضان آنے والا تھا کہ کویت کے ایک مسلمان خاندان سے میرا تعارف ہوا۔ یوسف الزواوی، سربراہ خانہ، بہت بیمار تھا، لیکن خدا پر مریض اور باقی خاندان کا یقین و ایمان دیکھ کر میں دنگ رہ گئی۔ یہ لوگ بھی حوصلہ مندی، صبر و استقامت، محبت اور خلوص کا بہت خوبصورت نمونہ تھے۔ مغربی گھرانوں کے برعکس، سب ایک دوسرے پر جان چھڑکتے اور سربراہ خانہ کی صحت یابی کیلئے کوئی دقیقہ اٹھانہ رکھتے۔ میں نے اپنے پیشے کے تقاضوں کو ملحوظ رکھتے ہوئے مریض کا خیال رکھا، اس کی وہ خوب قدر افزائی کرتے۔ ایک روز ممنونیت کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے یوسف الزواوی نے کہا ”میں آپ کی خدمت اور احسانات کا

شکر یہ کیسے ادا کروں؟ جی چاہتا ہے کہ ساری دولت آپ کے قدموں میں ڈھیر کر دوں۔ جی چاہتا ہے کہ آپ کو اپنی بہو بنالوں، آپ کو اپنے گھر کا فرد بنالوں۔“

”لیکن میں تو اس سے بھی قیمتی چیز کی طلبگار ہوں۔“

میں نے جواب میں تجسس پیدا کیا۔

”وہ کیا؟“ یوسف اور اس کا سارا خاندان پریشان ہو گیا۔ ”آپ مجھے مسلمان بنا لیجئے، اپنے دین میں شامل کر لیجئے۔“

میری بات سن کر اس گھرانے کا عجیب حال ہوا۔ خوشی سے اُن کی چیخیں نکل گئیں۔ یوسف کی آنکھیں بے اختیار چھلک پڑیں اور سب لوگ مسرت کے غیر معمولی احساس سے نہال ہو گئے، دوسرے دن میں نے کلمہ پڑھا اور ایک مسلمان کی حیثیت سے رمضان المبارک کے سارے روزے رکھے، نمازوں میں ذوق و شوق سے شرکت کی۔ الحمد للہ، مجھے میری منزل مل گئی، ایک گرا ہوا انسان اُٹھ کھڑا ہوا اور اندھیروں میں بھٹکتی ہوئی روح روشن، صاف و سیدھی شاہراہ پر آ گئی۔ سوچتی ہوں کہ اللہ تعالیٰ کے احسانِ عظیم کا شکر کیسے ادا کروں؟ وہ زبان کہاں سے لاؤں جو اس کی حمد و ثنا کرے؟

(ما خود ماہنامہ بیداری)

آخرت

آپ (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) کہہ دیجئے کہ اللہ کے سوا آسمانوں اور زمین میں کوئی بھی غیب کا علم نہیں رکھتا اور وہ یہ بھی نہیں جانتے کہ وہ (دوبارہ) کب زندہ کیے جائیں گے ○ بات یہ ہے کہ آخرت کا تو علم ہی ان لوگوں سے کم ہو گیا ہے، بلکہ یہ اس طرف سے شک میں ہیں، بلکہ یہ اس کی طرف سے اندھے بنے ہوئے ہیں ○

سورۃ نمل (27)..... ترجمہ آیات (65-66)